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Ontario Women's Directorate



# NEWS RELEASE

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## MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HELPS VULNERABLE WOMEN LEARN ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS UNDER ONTARIO FAMILY LAW

***Public Legal Education Will Help Women Make Informed Decisions***

**TORONTO** – The McGuinty government is launching a public education campaign to ensure that Ontario women know their legal rights under Ontario family law, announced Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello.

"We want to help women who may be isolated and do not have access to accurate and relevant information on how the law works, so that they are aware of their choices and options in family issues," Pupatello said. "This project will help more women make informed decisions for themselves and their families."

The McGuinty government is providing $1.3 million in funding to a consortium led by YWCA Toronto and made up of 24 women's organizations. The group will develop public legal education materials and outreach activities that will help women make informed decisions about family law issues.

"It is very exciting to work with the Ontario government on the Family Law Education for Women Project," said YWCA Toronto Chief Executive Officer Heather McGregor. "Working on a consortium with 24 other women's and community groups that are reflective of the diversity of the province in order to address the complexities of women's family law issues has been quite extraordinary. We are grateful that the Ontario government recognizes and understands the significance of this initiative for vulnerable and isolated women."

Information on family law is also available on the Ministry of the Attorney General website at www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca in the Family Justice section.

Minister with some of the members of the management committee and reference group for the Family Law Education for Women project. *From left to right:* Susan Barberstock, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC), Lisa Cirillo, Family Law Education for Women (FLEW), Jadwiga Gaszynski, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services (PICS), Wendy Komiotis, Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women & Children (METRAC), Élisabeth Larsen, Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes (AOcVF), Minister Sandra Pupatello, Heather McGregor, YWCA Toronto, Alia Hogben, Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), Corinne Rusch-Drutz, YWCA Toronto, Edeltraud Neal, Canadian Federation of University Women - Ontario Council (CFUW - OC), Julie Mathews, Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)

"Our government has ensured that potentially vulnerable people are protected under family law and that they can exercise their rights," said Attorney General Michael Bryant. "Today's announcement by Minister Pupatello is another great way to ensure that women in Ontario are informed of their rights."

This is just one more example of how working with Ontario communities, the McGuinty government has achieved results in helping vulnerable women, including:

- Spending more than $190 million annually to provide violence against women services across government. This includes more than $82 million in new funding over four years to the Domestic Violence Action Plan to provide better community-based supports, implement public education and training strategies, strengthen Ontario's criminal and family justice systems response, and provide better access to French-language services
- Providing $4.6 million since 2003 through the Women in Skilled Trades program to help low-income women develop new skills in the skilled trades
- Investing $2.7 million over two years to provide information technology training and $4 million over two years to 10 Employment Training Pilot Programs for low-income women.

"With this initiative, our government can help women get the information they need to make the best possible decisions for their families," said Pupatello.

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